

consideration the bill (H.R. 4194) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes:

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Chairman, for the past five years I have struggled with the Department of Housing and Urban Development to help the citizens of Houston. Houston is the fourth largest city—yet for a long time, they have lacked a full service HUD office. Out of the ten largest metropolitan areas, Houston was the only one without a fully serviceable HUD office.

Over the past five years I have worked with HUD and have received various verbal commitments and assurances that Houston would receive the necessary HUD staff and programs to be an effective agency to help the citizens of Houston. We've made some progress, but we still have a ways to go.

In past years, I have considered offering an amendment to this bill to require better HUD service for Houston residents. This year I will again try to work with the agency to ensure proper services for the city. This would include establishing an Office of Community Planning and Development, which would provide technical assistance and monitoring of state and local entities receiving federal funding to assist with elderly and disabled housing loans, CDBG, and funds for Houston's Enhanced Enterprise Community. This service is particularly important because of the city's growing population. Unfortunately, because there is no full service HUD office in the city, quality housing opportunities have not kept pace with the growth.

When I go back to my district and I talk with seniors, families and local officials, one of their greatest concerns is housing for the elderly. No one wants to see our elderly without shelter. An Office of Community Planning and Development would aid the citizens of Houston to gain access and administer funds to renovate, locate, and build elderly housing. This office also oversees funding and provides technical assistance to our Enhanced Enterprise Community.

HUD came up with a good idea to provide funds to local governments to help their economically disadvantaged areas through Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities.

Through tax breaks to businesses and access to federal funds and a plan drawn up by local communities, HUD hoped to revitalize disadvantaged areas. Houston has an Enhanced Enterprise Community, and we have access to two hundred million dollars to help revitalize parts of Houston. It would be a shame to see that money go to waste without proper support and assistance by HUD.

The nearest HUD office that offers this service is in Ft. Worth Texas, which is over two hundred miles away. My constituents have had to call to Ft. Worth to get someone from CPD to come down to Houston to check out a faulty foundation. Most of the time the response from Ft. Worth is that they don't have the money in their budget for travel or they have to wait for years for a response.

The citizens of Houston deserve better than having to call HUD in Ft. Worth, which is over 200 miles away, to get an inspector who can not travel because of budgetary constraints.

I still do not understand why the fourth largest city in the nation does not have all the HUD programs to serve its citizens.

When we first started looking into upgrading the Houston HUD field office, we received assurances from former Secretary Cisneros and now Secretary Cuomo that the Houston office would receive all available programs.

Without these offices who is going to monitor these programs, who is going to check for fraud, waste, and abuse. Who is going to help the citizens of Houston provide for their housing needs. If this critical change isn't made soon, I am concerned that more residents will be denied services they are entitled to.

While I am not offering an amendment this year, I am looking forward to working with the committee and administration to see that this issue can finally be resolved.

IN TRIBUTE

SPEECH OF

HON. JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 28, 1998

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, with a heavy heart I come before you today. On Friday, July 24, we lost two members of our congressional family: Capitol Police Officer Jacob J. Chestnut and Special Agent John Gibson.

Although tragic, these men died in service to their nation, in service to us. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

With faith and trust in God and the help of family and friends the Chestnut and Gibson families will endure this seemingly unbearable time. I hope that the families of these two men—genuine American heroes—take comfort in knowing that their husbands, their fathers, their brothers, their sons, did not die in vain. By laying down their lives, these two men upheld our most cherished principles of liberty and democracy. I speak for all Americans when I say I am grateful for and honored by their courage, service and sacrifice.

While we mourn their death, we also celebrate the lives of Officer Chestnut and Special Agent Gibson. All Americans can rest assured that their freedom and the future of this great land remain intact because Officers Chestnut and Gibson died preserving liberty so that we may survive in freedom. We all are forever indebted to them.

On behalf of the people of the Second District of Illinois, I thank Officers Chestnut and Gibson for giving the ultimate sacrifice so that all Americans can sleep tonight under a security blanket of freedom. Their earthly lives may have drawn to a close, but their lives with God are eternal. Psalm 30 reminds us that "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning."

YEAR 2000 PROBLEM

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 30, 1998

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, the year 2000 will herald the start of a new millennium. How-

ever, if our country doesn't address the Year 2000 or Y2K technology problem, the millennium may begin with numerous disruptions. Meeting the challenges presented by the Year 2000 conversion will require the commitment of significant resources from both the public and private sectors. The federal government, in particular, must take a leadership role. The federal government is fixing its own systems and must facilitate private sector conversion.

Today Mr. HORN and Mrs. MORELLA have introduced the "Year 2000 Information Disclosure Act". I am cosponsoring this bipartisan legislation which will serve to encourage businesses to share information on solving the Y2K bug. This legislation protects from liability claims those who in good faith share information on solving the Y2K problem.

Without timely sharing of data on the Y2K fix, many small-to-medium size companies may not meet the deadline of Jan. 1, 2000. This could have serious repercussions for the economy. Small to medium size businesses who face disruptions from the Y2K bug may simply not make it because they may not be able to continue business. Many business sectors are dependent on each other. They exchange information electronically every day. For this reason, it's crucial to limit liability for sharing information on Y2K solutions.

Currently, the President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion has determined that concern over liability is impeding the transfer of information on the Y2K bug between companies. The "Year 2000 Information Disclosure Act" is of national importance. I encourage this body to act on this legislation as soon as possible.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. KAREN MCCARTHY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4194) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes:

Ms. MCCARTHY. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to commend my colleagues for joining me in passing significant changes to the H.R. 4194, The Veterans Administration (VA)—Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—Independent Agencies Appropriations bill to remove restrictive language regarding the Brownfields initiative. Continued federal support and funding for this initiative is critical to the revitalization of our nation's urban core. In my district, Kansas City, Missouri, and our friends across the state line in Kansas City, Kansas, have joined to form a unique and innovative Brownfields partnership. This bi-state junction has not only received an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields grant in 1996, but recently was designated one of only 16 cities in the nation to become a Showcase Community.